

Secretary of Agriculture-Public Forum-Springfield, Missouri

Re: Question 4 – Conservation

Good afternoon and welcome to Southwest Missouri. My name is Kathryn Braden, and my husband and I are life long cattle ranchers here in SW Missouri. I am here today as a concerned citizen, Taney Co. Soil and Water Conservation District supervisor, and was appointed six months ago to the Missouri Soil & Water District Commission by Governor Matt Blunt.

*I would like to commend the leadership at the Federal level for their foresight in the Conservation Provisions in the 2002 Farm Bill focusing on conservation funding and environmental issues.*

That Farm Bill placed strong emphasis on the conservation of working lands, ensuring that the land remains both healthy and productive. All the voluntary programs like WHIP, EQIP, CSP, WRP and others are working extremely well in our state.

Missouri has also made a commitment to conservation. For over 20 years, citizens of Missouri have taxed themselves to support soil and water conservation - to my knowledge the only state whose citizens choose to do so – but we don't do it alone. We have a strong partnership in Missouri, and the Natural Resource Conservation Service is a big part of our success.

The conservation programs that NRCS administers are compatible with our state programs. We rely on the technical expertise and standards that NRCS brings to the table. NRCS and Missouri Department of Natural Resources work closely together to update soil science in Missouri to enable us to base decisions on sound science.

In conclusion, I would like to stress that maintaining the conservation provisions and the technical assistance at their current levels in the new farm bill are critical to our success in Missouri. We rely on NRCS to be a strong partner in conserving our soil and water resources for future generations.

Please keep that partnership healthy and strong by supporting NRCS's current budget levels, staffing, and conservation programs.

It is important to us and even more important to those who follow in our footsteps. Thank you for your attention and consideration.

Commissioner Kathryn Braden  
Missouri Department of Natural Resources  
Soil and Water Conservation Program  
4210 Blair Ridge Rd.  
Bradleyville, Mo. 65614

SWMOKATHRYN@aol.com  
417-785-4380 417-335-0671 (cell)